

Letter to Robert Moffat 1, 5 September 1845

Livingstone, David, 1813-1873

Published by Livingstone Online (livingstoneonline.org), 2017

[0001]

Mabotsa 5 Sept 1845

My Dear Father

The present note must be as hurried as any of yours. Mebaloe goes out on Monday in order to bring home his wife before he is required for thatching and as I have returned here on horseback and go again tomorrow there is no time for corresponding Everything you sent so far as we have been able to ascertain has come safely and we thank you heartily for the whole I heard at Chonuane that Mary had headache & when the Griqua messenger came I did not require any pressing to accept the invitation she was better before I came but I mean to purchase a horse so as to come here oftener. The walls are three feet high, this is to be the level of the floor, the outside to be raised for some distance around the house in order to avoid damp. We are 19 in all & hope soon to get up our tabernacle. The heifer which came from Obonyeñ & any others you can conveniently procure shall be glad of by Mebaloe. M^r Milligan promised to bring me a dozen

[0002]

the children here come to be taught by Mary at the house. Sechele acquired a perfect knowledge of the alphabet, large small & mixed in two days. I try to get breakfast before sun-rise & keep school in the Kotla as soon after as possible so as to have all set agoing in good time in the morning. I am extremely sorry at having involved you in the unpleasant affair with Edwards. It was entirely by a mistake on my part. The appearance of the man & his communication produced

a sort of bewilderment and as we were
on the power of starting for Sechele's I
was willing to give him a frank statement
before we did so & in doing so wrote with
more hurry than such a matter required
I read over yours hurriedly & thought that
the paper was official and it was not
till a &c perusal of yours convinced me
I was wrong that I knew the error I
had made. He however takes it
for granted that you have informed me
of everything for he begins his note by
"you have been informed that I applied &c"
but he has not the engenuity to allow anything

[0003]

If he can make a peg of it on which to hang
an accusation, and by the way I may mention
that I have nothing to do with his application
for advice. The form in which he now
puts his absence from the ordinances & station
we left this as he informed me in his note
in order to submit the affairs to a committee
of the bretheren. I do not feeling willing
to allow him to make turn rounds as he has
done in the affair. The charges as he now
puts them are false Not one of them
has he put in a plain straightforward way
so I dont see what I can do except
give a fair straightforward narration of
all that I know on the subject. It
will be prolix but these "charges" dontcon[-]
tain a tithe of the differences . . there is
not a word about the "dishonest dishonour[-]
able mischievous conduct". "The going to
natives" in the garden. The employing Mebaloe
privately &c &c and by the way you need
not suspect the Directors will imagine
my declining to have Mokoteri in on
your account. My declining to employ
not only one but everyone I shall

[0004]

attribute to one of the proper causes viz.
that there is not the least probability of my
recieving that cooperation without which
my single efforts would be futile. Send

Paul to Poe and whatever your motives may be in reality. Before twelve months pass over you may have as I have had from my beloved coadjutor all manner of motives kindly laid at your door. Unfortunately my letters for England are at Sechele. I shall leave that for the Directors [to] open. Please peruse it & tell me what you think of it, I thought at one time that I ought not to say a word about M^r E. until the committee had decided. And that has made me delay Mokoteri's affair longer than I intended or wished. The subject of my leaving & of Mebaloe & of others are so connected dovetailed I found I could not write without taking them in. I hope your promise to present my former letters does not apply to this. If it does you may stop that till you think proper

[0005]

2^d sheet. M^r Lemue seems rather sulky in his answers to what I wrote - does not wish to say anything more on the subject. I did not wish him to begin. "M^r Langa thinks the ideas of M^r [E] & M^{rs} E are very much exaggerated & that they dont seem to percieve ^ to what their con[-] duct will lead."

We are very happy to hear that Robert tries to improve. What he does is very commendable but he seems to want a guide in his studies, his letter indicates considerable mental activity. We thank you for the perusal. Many of his thoughts would vanish as many of ours have as soon as he breathed this pure atmosphere. the lack of the material for mechanical operations he does not know. But nothing is like the preaching of the word. Dogged perserverance at this is infinitely prefer rable to doctoring tinkering or anything else. You have but a small quantity of iron in the Kuruman district, none at all I imagine in Griqua[-] land. Copper has been worked very extensively at Chonuane, enormous amounts the labours of extraction have been. There is abundance of iron ore here but would Robert like to be M^r E's mechanic

[0006]

If he came out as an artizan I for one should bitterly regret it and then who is to support him in his journies? and his wife too! But it is unfair to criticise. they are the dreams - amiable speculations of one who seems quite on the right side Let us pray that he may be guided into the right path for the Redeemer[']s glory. And that he may yet become instrumental in more good to Africa than his young heart has ~~yet~~ ever concieved Poor little Helen. We dont think your decision wrong in her affair But we cant keep wishing what was beyond all our powers to effect that she had fallen into other connections We thank you for all you have sent and that most heartily thank you for the consolation in the barren cow case. Dont forget the noting down the gun locks & everything else requiring payment. If you do I shall give you a return of as strong consolation for I dont keep note. If there are anythings in the barrels which you M^r Ashton or Hamilton need dont spare them Take what you want. I have not a moment[']s leisure to answer theirs which I recieved and for which thank them through you

[0007]

In regard to the head chest at Philipolis you have said & done enough. We must now leave it to time which effects such mighty changes in our world. Inglis may chuckle but to me it is now mystery how he got information. When we were sitting in committee a report was made to Hume regularly of our proceedings could that tongue keep a secret? We have our justification we are all willing that proper subjects be engaged. The Mokoteri was not a proper subject at that time Can we be blamed for taking time to ascertain the latter fact more fully by our bretheren taking silent observations of him without his knowing it?

We shall feel obliged if you furnish our accounts at your convenience. We wish it lest we run too deep into the mind ere we are aware. We must excercise the bump of caution in order that it may grow bigger

Mary says if you come do so in December
I put it down from her mouth, I dont
know her reasons. The vine cuttings &c
are very acceptable. Our peaches are in
blossom, but the figs, it was too much
for their constitution - many have died

[0008]

I mean to plant (How did the dried figs in the jar do)
a hedge of hackey down, but dont need the shears
O I mean to do many things but time [is] so difficult
to be killed by some. expires always sooner
then I want it. M^r Oswal says all the
features of the Bamangwato country are
Indian the bushes trees &c. are exactly
similar. Mahatla hackey dorn Rose or
as he calls it black wood & wood apple
that which I brought out are plentiful
in India. (M^r E has taken a specimen of
Rose wood to Graham's Town) they saw
& measured Hume's big tree 51 feet in
circumference Cumming is gone to the
range of hills EE N of the Bakaa. I did
not hear of the "long white man" We have
heard that Charles recieved the ten pounds
safely. The previous Five I sent by
another route are not mentioned. My
Father['s] family are all in a state of
poor health. My sister's constitution
seems broken up by Typhus Fever. Not
the one you saw but she too has suffered
from the same cause & has palpitations of
the heart. Charles's college term expired
last month to country or something else comes next